

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 099985 TOSEC 040142
ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

66011

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APPROVED BY S/S-O:TGMARTIN

-----072215 190430Z /73

O 190348Z APR 78 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 099985 TOSEC 040142

FOL RPT PANAMA 2681 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO PANCANAL & USCINCSO
DTD 19 APR 78

QUOTE: UNCLAS PANAMA 2681

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PN

SUBJECT: TORRIJOS ACCEPTS CANAL TREATIES

1. IN A 17-MINUTE ADDRESS TO THE NATION CARRIED ON
A NATIONAL RADIO AND TV NETWORK AT 1830 TUESDAY,
APRIL 18, CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT GEN. TORRIJOS ANNOUNCED
THAT THE CANAL TREATIES, AS JUST APPROVED BY THE
SENATE, WERE ACCEPTABLE TO HIM AND TO PANAMA.

2. HE SAID THAT HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT HAD ON SEVERAL
OCCASIONS DURING THE SENATE DEBATES BEEN AT THE POINT
OF REJECTING THE TREATIES BECAUSE OF THE INSULTING
AND INTERVENTIONIST PROVISIONS ADDED TO THEM. HOWEVER,
THE GOVERNMENT HAD ADOPTED A "PRUDENT" POLICY OF SILENCE
UNTIL BOTH TREATIES HAD BEEN ACTED UPON. THE SENATE
HAD TAKEN ACTION APPROPRIATE TO REMOVE THE INSULT; THE
TREATIES IN THEIR APPROVED FORM CONTAINED NO JUSTIFICA-
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PAGE 02 STATE 099985 TOSEC 040142

TION FOR INTERVENTION AND WERE THUS ACCEPTABLE TO A
COUNTRY WHICH HAD NO WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT INTERVENTION.

3. HE PRAISED THE RESTRAINT AND PRUDENCE SHOWN BY THE
PANAMANIAN PEOPLE DURING THE SENATE DEBATE, AND CALLED
TODAY'S ACTION THE LONG-SOUTH PATRIOTIC TRIUMPH OF
THE NEGOTIATING ROAD TO NATIONAL LIBERATION.

4. DURING HIS SPEECH, TORRIJOS ANNOUNCED THAT NOW THAT THE TREATIES WERE APPROVED, POLITICAL PARTIES WOULD BE PERMITTED TO OPERATE "FREELY". AND ALL EXILES, "WITHOUT EXCEPTION", WOULD NOW BE PERMITTED TO RETURN TO THE COUNTRY.

5. FBIS/PANAMA IS PROVIDING FULL TEXT OF ADDRESS, TO CLEAR BUREAU PRIOR TO 2100 THIS EVENING.

6. GENERAL ATMOSPHERE IN PANAMA CITY FOLLOWING FINAL SENATE VOTE IS FESTIVE, WITH FIREWORKS, PARTIES IN MANY PLACES AND FIFTH OF MAY PLAZA AND CENTRAL AVENUE FULL OF GENERALLY HAPPY CROWDS. HOWEVER, THERE ARE REPORTS OF SOME GROUPS OF ANTI-TREATY STUDENTS MOVING AT SANTA ANA PLAZA IN DOWNTOWN PANAMA CITY, AND POSSIBLY AT OTHER POINTS. POLICE PROTECTION AT EMBASSY IS HEAVY AND NATIONAL GUARD HAS ADVISED IT WILL CONTINUE THROUGHOUT EVENING.

7. TORRIJOS WAS SCHEDULED TO GIVE A PRESS CONFERENCE FOR LOCAL AND FOREIGN JOURNALISTS IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS ADDRESS; FURTHER REPORT WILL FOLLOW. JORDEN UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TREATY RATIFICATION, AGREEMENTS, TOSEC, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, UPPER HOUSE, CANALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE099985
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O:TGMARTIN
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780167-0053
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780439/aaaabgti.tel
Line Count: 85
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 244b01ab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2913823
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TORRIJOS ACCEPTS CANAL TREATIES
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PGOV, PBOR, EWWT, PN, US
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/244b01ab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014